



STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA  
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL  
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# Press Release

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**For Immediate Release:**

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**Attorney General McGraw Awards \$100,000 to the Wheeling-Ohio County Health Department to Implement its Wheeling Walks Program**

Attorney General Darrell McGraw today announced a \$100,000 award to be given to the Wheeling-Ohio County Health Department to fund an extension of its Wheeling Walks program. The funding for this award is from the proceeds of the settlement West Virginia received in its antitrust lawsuit against Bristol-Myers Squibb Co., Watson Pharma, Inc. and Danbury Pharmacal, Inc. involving the widely-prescribed anti-anxiety drug BuSpar. West Virginia along with 34 other states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, sued Bristol and the other defendants claiming they prevented generic forms of BuSpar from being sold to consumers, thus keeping the price of the brand-name drug BuSpar unlawfully inflated.

The Wheeling Walks program will promote a Youth Fitness Campaign designed to encourage young people to become physically active through walking. This program is intended to combat the growing obesity rate among children, particularly those in the pre-adolescent years.

This local initiative is in the very early stages of development by local and state experts. Plans are to model the local effort after the nationally renowned Verb Camapaign. VERB is a national, social marketing campaign coordinated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The VERB campaign encourages young people ages 9-13 years to be physically active every day. The campaign combines paid advertising, marketing strategies, and partnership efforts to reach the distinct audience of children ages 9-13 years of age. Modeled after the international success of the Wheeling Walks campaign, organizers hope to focus on communications, advocacy, policy change, and programming. This effort will represent a partnerships among community leaders, local organizations, agencies, businesses, and government.

"Among the obvious problems associated with obesity is the great toll it takes on West Virginia in terms of health care dollars," McGraw stated. "It's important to counter the spiraling decline in physical activity among our children. If we approach this problem now, when our citizens are young, then we are more likely to reduce the rates of obesity among West Virginians of tomorrow," McGraw added.

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